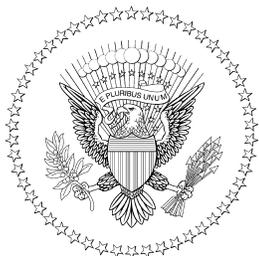


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, March 10, 2008
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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, March 7, 2008

Proclamation 8223—Irish-American Heritage Month, 2008

February 29, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Since the earliest days of our Republic, Irish Americans have enriched our culture with their faith, values, and hard work. During the month of March, we celebrate the contributions of Americans who trace their ancestry back to Ireland's shores.

Many of the sons and daughters of Erin came to America fleeing famine and poverty. They came with dreams of opportunity, and they helped to build our democracy and advance the cause of liberty. Irish Americans in all walks of life have made lasting contributions to our Nation, and we honor the service of Irish Americans in America's Armed Forces. Throughout our history, those claiming Irish ancestry have helped shape and strengthen America, including as signers of the Declaration of Independence and as Presidents of the United States.

This month, we celebrate the patriotic and proud people who originated from the Emerald Isle and who have played a vital role in the story of this Nation of immigrants.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2008 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by celebrating the contributions of Irish Americans to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United

States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:55 a.m., March 4, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 8224—National Consumer Protection Week, 2008

February 29, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we face new challenges in the 21st century, we must work to ensure that Americans are kept safe in the marketplace. During National Consumer Protection Week, as my Administration works with Congress to improve our consumer product safety system, we also encourage Americans to make informed financial decisions and take advantage of the resources that can help them become responsible consumers, savers, and investors.

This year's theme for National Consumer Protection Week, "Financial Literacy: A Sound Investment," encourages consumers to take steps to build a firm financial foundation. By becoming informed consumers, individuals can help plan for their future, protect their identity, and effectively manage their finances. It is important for citizens to be knowledgeable on financial matters such as choosing a health insurance plan, comparing savings and retirement plans, and realizing how credit scores can affect them. Education is the first line of defense in helping consumers manage their money wisely and safeguard themselves against fraud and identity theft.

My Administration is working to expand the American people's financial education. In January of this year, I signed an Executive Order establishing the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy. This Council will help keep America competitive and assist Americans in understanding and addressing financial matters. By visiting consumer.gov and mymoney.gov, Americans can discover the tools they need to make financial decisions and be successful in today's marketplace.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2 through March 8, 2008, as National Consumer Protection Week. I call upon Government officials, industry leaders, and consumer advocates to make available information about how citizens can help to prevent fraud and identity theft, and I encourage all Americans to gain the financial literacy they need to compete in the 21st century.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:55 a.m., March 4, 2008]

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The President's Radio Address

March 1, 2008

Good morning. Today my administration is releasing our 2008 National Drug Control Strategy. This report lays out the methods we are using to combat drug abuse in America, and it highlights the hopeful progress we're making in the fight against addiction.

When I took office in 2001, our country was facing a troubling rate of drug abuse, particularly among young people. Through-

out America, young men and women saw their dreams disrupted by the destructive cycle of addiction. So I committed our Nation to an ambitious goal. In 2002, we began efforts to cut drug use among young people by 25 percent over 5 years.

Our strategy has three key elements. First, we are working to disrupt the supply of drugs by strengthening law enforcement and partnering with other countries to keep drugs out of the United States. Second, we're working to reduce the demand for drugs through prevention and education programs. And third, we're providing treatment options for those who've fallen prey to addiction.

These efforts have produced measurable results. Since 2001, the rate of youth drug abuse has dropped by 24 percent. Young people's use of marijuana is down by 25 percent. Their use of ecstasy has dropped by more than 50 percent. And their use of methamphetamine has declined by 64 percent. Overall, an estimated 860,000 fewer young people in America are using drugs today than when we began these efforts.

Our drug control strategy will continue all three elements of this successful approach. It will also target a growing problem, the abuse of prescription drugs by youth. Unfortunately, many young Americans do not understand how dangerous abusing medication can be. And in recent years, the number of Americans who have died from prescription drug overdoses has increased.

One of the factors behind this trend is the growing availability of highly addictive prescription drugs online. The Internet has brought about tremendous benefits for those who cannot easily get to a pharmacy in person. However, it has also created an opportunity for unscrupulous doctors and pharmacists to profit from addiction.

One victim of such a doctor was Ryan Haight. The young man from California was only 18 when he overdosed on painkillers that were illegally prescribed over the Internet. With only a few clicks of the mouse, Ryan was able to get a prescription from a doctor he had never met and have the pills sent to his front door. The doctor who wrote Ryan's prescription had previously served time in prison for illegally dispensing controlled substances.

We need to prevent tragedies like this from happening in the future. So I'm asking Congress to work with my administration to put an end to the illegal sale of highly addictive prescription drugs on the Internet. By working together to meet this goal, we can ensure a safer future for our children.

Government action is only one part of the solution to the problem of drug abuse. Others in our society have an important role to play as well. People in the entertainment and sports industries serve as role models to millions of young Americans, and that comes with the responsibility to dispel the notion that drug abuse is glamorous and free of consequences. Teachers, pastors, and parents also have an obligation to help young people develop the character and self-respect to resist drugs. The Federal Government will continue to do its part to keep our young people safe, and I urge all Americans to do the same. Our children deserve nothing less.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on February 29 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark in Crawford, Texas

March 1, 2008

President Bush. Welcome. Thanks for coming. A couple opening statements, and we'll answer two questions apiece.

Mr. Prime Minister, we're really thrilled you're here. Laura and I love having you and Anne-Mette with us. Pretty good guests when you can have a meaningful mountain bike ride at sunset and then at sunrise, and the man not even break into a sweat. You're in incredible condition, and I really have enjoyed my time with you—my time when we talked and my time when we rode. I also appreciate the fact that you're a good personal friend and a strong leader.

I want to share with you some of the things we talked about. First of all, we talked about the war on terror and the ideological struggle of the 21st century. I appreciate your clear vision of the threats we all face—and the opportunities that, by working together, we can help young democracies survive and help people realize the blessings of free societies.

I do want to thank you very much for the strong support of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. I know brave Danish soldiers have lost their lives. Our deepest sympathies go for their—to their loved ones. It is painful when anybody loses a life in any time, but—much less in combat. But it's very important for the people of Denmark, like it is for the people of the United States, to understand that, one, we're denying extremist groups safe haven, the very same groups that attacked and killed thousands of innocent people. We're helping young girls go to school. We're helping infrastructure develop. We're helping people find health care. We're helping a hopeful society begin to emerge. And we spent a lot of time talking about that.

I also appreciate very much the Danish contributions to help the people of Iraq. I strongly believe on the policy of return on success. We're returning some of our troops based upon success. That's precisely what the Danish Government did, because they were successful in their mission. And I congratulate you, Mr. Prime Minister, for having a vision.

I also was able to share with you my sense of what's happening in Iraq. We're watching a young democracy grow, much to the amazement a lot of critics, a lot of people who said, "Well, it's impossible for this to happen in the rocky soils of Iraq." And it's happening today. And there's still more work to be done.

We're looking forward to our summit in Bucharest. We talked about what we intend to do and how to work to have a comprehensive, strategic plan available for Iraq—I mean, for Afghanistan, so our allies can take this plan home, can explain to the people why it's important. We also talked about the need to make sure that there's more civilian-military cooperation, that tangible evidence of a free society begins to become more evident to people and to grassroots in Afghanistan.

We talked about the spirit of NATO's open door policy. And we jointly welcome new nations in the alliance, so long as they meet the standards for membership.

We also talked about other global challenges. We talked about Iran, about how Iran must verifiably suspend its uranium enrichment program and come clean about its nuclear intentions and past actions. I also want Iran to stop supporting terror.

We also talked about Africa. I briefed the Prime Minister on our trip to Africa, talked about our mutual desire to help the folks suffering in Darfur. We talked about what happened in Kenya, and we're most grateful to the leaders there to help reconcile what could have been a very difficult situation.

Finally, we talked about climate change—more than once. We talked about climate change as I showed him my ranch and about how we're conservationists here in Crawford. And then we talked about the need for us to develop alternative technologies. And I really do welcome Denmark's leadership for the 2009 U.N. climate change meeting. And I appreciate very much you taking the lead in this issue.

And—look, it was a great visit. And I'm now looking forward to giving the man a hamburger—[laughter]—after answering a couple of questions. But, welcome, sir.

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Let me first of all express my gratitude for your invitation to visit your ranch in Crawford. My wife and I are very pleased to be here. We have had a rewarding stay and a challenging stay, I must say. [Laughter] You made me work very hard out there on the terrific mountain bike trails on your wonderful ranch. And I can't imagine a better place to spend time talking and enjoying time with good friends. And I can't imagine a better symbol of the close and strong ties between the United States and Denmark.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Mr. President, freedom, democracy, and human rights are the core values that unite us. Freedom and dignity of the individual are universal values. It is values that people living under oppression and brutal regimes strive for. We have an obligation to stand by these people

in their struggle for liberty and democracy. This is our common challenge. And you, Mr. President, and the United States have, above anyone else, advanced this vision of liberty and democracy around the world. Allow me to pay tribute to you for this.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Rasmussen. And it is no easy task. There are obstacles and opponents. But I do share your vision. Freedom is universal. And in the struggle between democracy and dictatorship, no one can be neutral. It is as simple as that.

That is why we are in Afghanistan to fight the Taliban. That is why we removed the brutal dictator in Iraq. That is why your leadership in the Middle East is crucial. That is why we work for development and against extremism in Africa. That is why we have joined forces in the Balkans, stabilized and recognized Kosovo, and work for Balkan countries to be fully integrated in Europe.

The United States and Europe are key partners in this endeavor. Through NATO and the European Union, we reach out to aspiring countries like Ukraine and Georgia. We support their efforts to reform and develop links with Europe and across the Atlantic. And we will send a strong signal of support from our upcoming NATO summit in Bucharest.

Mr. President, as you mentioned, in 2009 Denmark will host the Global Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. And it will take place in the land of windmills. We need a comprehensive global agreement, and American leadership is needed to reach that goal. And American leadership is crucial in order to motivate major economies like India and China to contribute.

Climate is a huge international challenge. Many countries are suffering from adverse weather conditions. We need to protect our globe. We need to reduce CO₂ emissions through green technology. We need to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, and we need to break our addiction to oil, not only to counter climate change but also to reduce our dependency on unstable and sometimes even undemocratic regimes. And I see the United States and Europe as key partners in the struggle to fight climate change and ensure energy security.

Mr. President, together we have handled the challenges of the past. Now let us together meet the challenges and threats of the future. We owe that to future generations.

Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

Iraq/Iran

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Yes, Deb.

Q. I'd like to ask you about Iraq. General Petraeus and Gates are talking about a pause in troop reductions once we get to the pressure levels in July. Will that be it, or is it possible that there will be additional drawdowns before you leave office?

And also, does the Iraqi Government's decision to host Ahmadi-nejad in Baghdad undermine your efforts to isolate Tehran?

President Bush. To the latter, I—look, I mean, he's a neighbor. And the message needs to be, quit sending in sophisticated equipment that's killing our citizens, and that the message will be that we're negotiating a long-term security agreement with the United States precisely because we want enough breathing space for our democracy to develop.

My message is for him, stop exporting terror, and that the international community is serious about continuing to isolate Iran until they come clean about their nuclear weapons ambitions. And that's why there will be action in the United Nations here early next week as we work collaboratively to continue to send a clear message.

In terms of troop levels, there is going to be enormous speculation, again, about what decision I will make. I can only tell you, Deb, that it's going to be based upon the recommendations of Secretary Gates, General Petraeus, the Joint Chiefs. My sole criterion is, whatever we do, it ought to be in the context of success.

If we fail in Iraq, the consequences for world peace will be enormous, the consequences for the security of the United States will be enormous. And therefore, my question is, what does it take to succeed? And we're not going to let politics drive my decision—again. If I worried about polls and focus groups, I wouldn't have sent more

troops in. I sent more troops in because the situation was unacceptable. And now we're succeeding. And so therefore, Ryan Crocker—the Ambassador—and General Petraeus will be coming back, and they'll report to the country, and they'll report to me. And the decisions—you'll see them evolve.

Q. Can I ask just one followup?

President Bush. Maybe. [Laughter]

U.S. Troop Levels in Iraq/Iraqi Provincial Elections

Q. Are you worried about reducing U.S. troop presence before the elections in October?

President Bush. Deb, see, that's what I said. I just—politics isn't going to play into it.

Q. You mean the Iraqi politics?

President Bush. Oh, you mean the Iraqi—I thought you meant our—

Q. No, no.

President Bush. I didn't listen.

Q. I'm sorry. [Laughter]

President Bush. I apologize.

Q. I believe there's Provincial elections coming up in—

President Bush. There are.

Q. Okay. Which—

President Bush. The 1st of October 2008—that's very observant.

Q. Would you be worried about—

President Bush. And I was not being observant. And it must be because I'm just so relaxed on the ranch, I didn't even bother to listen to your question. [Laughter]

Q. Would you be concerned about doing it before then?

President Bush. I think our generals ought to be concerned about making sure there's enough of a presence so that the Provincial elections can be carried off in such a way that democracy advances. But that—I'll wait and hear what they have to say. But, yes, I mean, that ought to be a factor in their recommendation to me. I apologize.

Do you want to call on somebody?

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Yup.

Progress in Iraq

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, the war in Iraq—if we could stay on that subject for just a minute—I mean,

it's been going on for almost 5 years. Is there anything you would have done differently, Mr. President, if you had known back then in 2003 what you know today?

President Bush. That's an interesting question. One thing I wouldn't do differently is leave Saddam Hussein in power. It was the right decision then; it's the right decision today; and it will be viewed as the right decision when history is finally written.

You know, I—look, I mean, there's going to be ample time to second-guess decisions, and I'll let the historians do that. A war is constantly changing, and what appears to have been an easy decision today might have been a lot difficult when you take it—put it in historical context. And so my focus, sir, is moving forward and making sure this progress that we're watching continues.

And there's been some ups and downs, obviously. I mean, the great moments were, of course, the writing of a modern Constitution for the Middle East and votes for a President and a Parliament. And then 2006 came along, and an enemy was able to stir up unbelievable sectarian hatred and violence. And so I had a choice to make, you know, accept it and allow for failure, or do something about it. And obviously, I chose the latter, which was—I wouldn't call that exactly a popular decision. But if you follow popularity as your guide, then you sacrifice principle and vision.

And so—look, this is a—this will be an important chapter of my Presidency, and they'll be analyzing these decisions for a long time. And I just got to tell you, I've got great faith in the capacity of democracy to be transformative, not only for the people of Iraq but for the region. And that's why we're discussing with the Iraqis a long-term security agreement, to have a—have the kind of effect that will enable people to be confident to make hard decisions when it comes to reconciliation and political progress.

But the historians, I'm sure, will find ample—well, there's some short-term historians already trying to find some ample opportunity to figure out what went right or what went wrong, what we could have done differently. But there's no such thing as accurate short-term history, as far as I'm concerned. There needs to be time for people

to be able to see and put things in proper perspective.

Michael [Michael Emanuel, FOX News].

Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you for bringing us to the great weather.

The President. Yes, back to Texas, man. The guy cut his teeth in Texas. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, you've had an opportunity to meet with multiple leaders this week to talk about the war in Afghanistan. As you head into the NATO summit next month, what do you anticipate, in terms of, do you think some of the allies may be able to contribute more in terms of trainers and Provincial Reconstruction Teams?

And Mr. Prime Minister, we've heard the President and other U.S. officials praise Denmark's contribution to Afghanistan. I'm wondering what you think can be done to encourage some other NATO allies to perhaps step up and contribute more.

President Bush. As you know, my administration has made it abundantly clear, we expect people to carry their—to carry a heavy burden if they're going to be in Iraq—Afghanistan. In other words, Secretary Gates made—said, look, if we're going to fight as an alliance, let's fight as an alliance.

Having said that, I understand there's certain political constraints on certain countries. And so we ought to be—I am going to go to Bucharest with the notion that we're thankful for the contributions being made and encourage people to contribute more. The United States is putting in 3,200 additional marines. We are trying to help Canada realize her goal of 1,000 additional fighters in the southern part of the country, as is Anders working toward that.

You know, the key in Bucharest is for people to—from around the world to understand, one, how important the mission is to the successes that are being achieved. Remember last year about this time, it was, the Taliban was going on the offensive; the Taliban was going to be doing this; the Taliban was going to be doing that. Well, the Taliban had a bad year when it came to military operations. And are they still dangerous? Yes, they're dangerous. They're still capable of convincing young kids to go in and blow

people up with suicide vests. That's dangerous. Are they overwhelming the Government? No. Do they have a presence in the country? Yes. Do we have the capacity to go after them? Absolutely. Do we need more capacity? Yes, we do, and that's the mission, and that's what we'll work on.

The other thing, as Anders mentioned and I mentioned, was that this is an opportunity to keep an open door policy for NATO, presuming that countries meet certain criterion and meet the obligations to which they signed up.

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Thank you very much. We have to make sure that our mission in Afghanistan will be a success. A lot is at stake for the Afghan people, for international security, and for NATO. Therefore, we need more troops in Afghanistan. This is the reason why Denmark decided to increase our number of troops, equivalent to 50 percent, last autumn.

I feel confident that we can convince partners to contribute with more troops than today. And I think the best way to encourage partners to contribute to a higher degree is to show the good example. Denmark is a small country, but per capita, Denmark is among the biggest contributors in Afghanistan. And we work together with the British in the southern Helmand Province, really a hot spot. And so I think the good example is a very important thing.

And finally, I think we should be better to tell the positive stories about Afghanistan because, actually, there is a lot of progress—democracy, construction of infrastructure, roads, the health system is in a better condition, not least education. Girls and women have now access to the educational system. We should be better to tell this positive story, and thereby encourage the international community to step up its efforts.

President Bush. Final question, Anders; I'm getting hungry. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Yes. We have a Danish gentleman over here.

President Bush. Yes.

2008 Presidential Election/Environment

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, you talked about climate. Did these talks make you believe that a bridge can be made so that there will

be an agreement at the U.N. climate summit in Copenhagen in 2009?

And Mr. President, based on what we have heard the two Democratic leading contenders for your job state about foreign policy, what parts of your foreign policy do you see threatened by—

President Bush. Yes. You know, that's a very clever attempt—I'm going to let him answer the climate change thing—but it's a very clever attempt by you to drag me into the middle of the 2008 campaign, similar to what these two fine folks—three fine folks have been doing. So therefore, we'll let it sort out. But I will tell you this: The issue in America is going to be, who will keep taxes low, and who will be tough in protecting America. And our candidate for President is going to win because he will have convinced the American people to this truth.

Nice try. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Thank you. Our talks about climate change have really been encouraging. Actually—excuse me, Mr. President—I think the American President is really a convinced environmentalist. And the President has assured me that the United States will take leadership in our endeavors to achieve a comprehensive global deal in Copenhagen in 2009.

And I have commended the President for his initiative to gather the 15 or 17 major economies in the world, because we have to take on board all the major emitters of greenhouse gases. And I consider the American initiative a very valuable input in our preparations for the Global Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. So based on our talks today, I'm a bit more optimistic than I was before.

President Bush. I know when he says committed environmentalist, it doesn't conform to stereotype. All I ask people is to look at the record.

Thank you all very much for coming. We're thrilled you're here at the ranch. Good to see some of you again. Welcome.

2008 Presidential Election

Q. Did you vote in the Texas primary?

The President. I did, and I'm not telling you who. [Laughter] Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12 noon at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Anne-Mette Rasmussen, wife of Prime Minister Rasmussen; President Mahmud Ahmadinejad of Iran; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Remarks to the National Association of Attorneys General

March 3, 2008

General Wasden, thank you, sir. And General Lynch, thank you for having the Attorney General and me here to visit with the Nation's attorney generals. I thank you very much for serving the country. I'm honored that you've stepped forward to say, you know, my family—I'm going to put my family in such a way that we're going to serve together. And I hope you have found the experience to be as enriching as I've found it—my experience in public life to be.

I also know that you're dealing with a wide variety of issues. I was the Governor of Texas. I see my—the attorney general of Texas here. It's been—it was a great joy to work with Greg when I was the Governor. We have a solemn responsibility together, and that's to protect the country. You do it in a variety of ways. And we've got a responsibility here. As a matter of fact, there's no greater responsibility at the Federal Government than to protect the American people, which means that we must make sure our professionals have the tools they need to do the jobs we've asked them to do.

Now, there's a serious debate here, and some of the attorney generals have written a letter, both Democrats and Republicans, urging that the debate be solved in such a way that the professionals can do the job. And I thank you for wading in. There's a lot of legal complexities on the FISA renewal debate, but the real issue comes down to this: To defend the country, we need to be able to monitor communications of terrorists quickly and be able to do it effectively.

And we can't do it without the cooperation of private companies. Now, unfortunately, some of the private companies have been sued for billions of dollars because they are believed to have helped defend America

after the attacks on 9/11. Now the question is, should these lawsuits be allowed to proceed, or should any company that may have helped save American lives be thanked for performing a patriotic service? Should those who stepped forward to say we're going to help defend America have to go to the courthouse to defend themselves, or should the Congress and the President say, thank you for doing your patriotic duty? I believe we ought to say thank you.

I'm really appreciative of the fact that 21 State attorney generals, 7 Democrats and 14 Republicans, wrote a letter stating that assistance from private companies, as they put it, "is utterly essential" and urges the Senate—at the time—to approve FISA reform that protects the companies from lawsuits. I think that represents what most people—how most people think here in the country.

The Senate heard you and heard the voices of other people and passed a really good FISA reform bill by a strong bipartisan majority, 68 to 29. The answer to the question about whether we ought to thank or sue is also clear to the majority in the House of Representatives. If this bill, the Senate bill, were allowed—were given a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives, it would pass. There's enough votes available to pass a good Senate bill that would give our professionals the tools they need to protect the American people from further attack.

Unfortunately, a minority in the House has been holding the bill up. Now, this weekend there was some encouraging news. The chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Sylvester Reyes, said that he was open to passing a bill with protections for our private sector partners, including those companies who are currently being sued for allegedly helping us after 9/11. I appreciate the chairman's comments, and I urge the full House to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

I feel strongly about this issue, not only because I know we need to have the private carriers available to provide information, but, to put it bluntly, if the enemy is calling in to somebody in the United States, we need to know who they're talking to and why they're calling and what they intend to do.

These lawsuits are really unfair if you think about it. If any of the companies believed

to have helped us—I'm just going to tell you: They were told it was legal by the Government, and they were told it was necessary by the Government. And here they are getting sued. It would be dangerous—the reason—the danger in all this is that because the private companies are fearful of lawsuits or being besieged by lawsuits, they would be less willing to help in the future.

If your Government has said this is legal and we want your help and then all of a sudden they get sued for billions of dollars, you can imagine how hesitant they'll be with future requests. And yet the threat is ongoing. And that's why we said, failure by the House to act on the Senate bill would create an intelligence gap that is unacceptable.

So I appreciate your interest in the subject. Thank you for giving me and the General a chance to come by, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to State Attorneys General Lawrence Wasden of Idaho, Patrick C. Lynch of Rhode Island, and Greg Abbott of Texas.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno

March 3, 2008

General Ray Odierno served for 30 months in Iraq. He's nominated to Vice Chairman [Vice Chief of Staff] * of the Army. And I asked him to come in for several reasons. One, I wanted to thank him. And in thanking the general, I'm really thanking everybody who has worn the uniform and served in this war against the extremists and terrorists. And in thanking the general, I'm also thanking Mrs. Odierno and every wife or every husband whose spouse has been far away from home and is serving.

And in listening to the general, I was listening carefully to make sure that the decisions that had been made were the right decisions and that the progress that's being made is real. I mean, this is a man who was there

* White House correction.

when times looked grim and a man who observed firsthand progress that was made as a result of the surge.

He was a straightforward fellow who gave me his candid advice on how best to proceed—not necessarily with troop levels, because that study is going on now, but in making sure that we continue programs such as what's called the CERP money. This is money for our commanders to make—to help these local folks rebuild and reconcile.

And so, general, I want to thank you for your service. And I appreciate the fact that you really snatched defeat out of the jaws of those who are trying to defeat us in Iraq. You were the—you and General Petraeus were an unbelievably strong one-two combination.

And my call and my assurance, sir, is that the gains that you and your teams have made will continue on, because stakes in Iraq are essential for peace, essential for freedom, and essential for the security of this country. I'm honored to be your Commander in Chief.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Linda Odierno, wife of Lt. Gen. Odierno; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor to Woodrow W. Keeble

March 3, 2008

The President. Welcome. Thanks for coming. Mr. Vice President, Mr. Secretary, members of the Dakotan congressional delegations, Senator from Alaska, other Members of Congress, members of my Cabinet, members of the administration, members of the United States Armed Forces, distinguished guests: Welcome to the White House.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor a President can bestow. And I'm honored recipients of the Medal of Honor have joined us. Thank you for coming.

During my time in office, I've had the privilege of performing this duty on nine separate occasions. Every ceremony has been inspiring; many have been joyful; some have been poignant. But I'm not sure I can remember many ceremonies quite like this one.

It's taken nearly 60 years for Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble to be awarded the medal he earned on the battlefield in Korea. His nominating paperwork was lost, and then it was resubmitted, and then it was lost again. Then the deadline passed, and Woody and his family were told it was too late. Some blamed the bureaucracy for a shameful blunder. Others suspected racism. Woody was a full-blooded Sioux Indian. Whatever the reason, the first Sioux to ever receive the Medal of Honor died without knowing it was his. A terrible injustice was done to a good man, to his family, and to history. And today we're going to try to set things right.

Few people worked harder for this day than Woody's family. I thank the members who are with us, including his son, Russell, who is accepting this award on their behalf, along with his cousin—cousin.

Audience member. Nephew.

The President. —along with his nephew. I want to welcome you here. Thank you for supporting Woody. Thank you for your understanding, your patience, and, most of all, your persistence.

I also offer special thanks to the determined delegations of North and South Dakota, including the Governor of North Dakota and the former Governor of South Dakota. Woody has ties to both Dakotas. Each State claims him as his own. [*Laughter*] I think I'm going to stay out of the argument. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you for carrying Woody's banner to the Pentagon and to the Halls of Congress. You did the right thing.

It's easy to understand why so many people argued so passionately for the medal once you hear the story of what Woody Keeble did. This story unfolded at an important time in our history. The year was 1951. The world was divided by a cold war. America was under threat and, some believed, over-matched and out of heart. The great evil of communism was said to be the future of the

world. It was on the advance in Europe and in China and on the Asian peninsula of Korea.

On that peninsula, a battle raged between Communist forces in the North and the forces of freedom in the South. And Woody Keeble, a decorated veteran of Guadalcanal, raised his hand to serve his country once again. Woody said he volunteered for Korea because "somebody had to teach those kids how to fight." And that's exactly what he did.

In George Company, he quickly became a mentor, a teacher, and a legend. He was so strong that he could lift the back of a jeep and spin it around. Some people knew he had been scouted by the Chicago White Sox. He had a heck of an arm, and he threw grenades like a baseball. One soldier remembered the time Woody walked through a mine field, leaving tracks for his men to follow. Another recalled the time Woody was shot twice in the arm, and he kept fighting without seeming to notice.

That fall, Woody's courage was on full display during a major offensive called Operation No Man [Nomad]*. His company was ordered to take a series of hills protecting a major enemy supply line. High up in those hills and manning machine guns were Chinese Communist forces. After days of fighting, the officers in Woody's company had fallen. Woody assumed command of one platoon, then a second, and then a third, until one of the hills was taken and the enemy fled in wild retreat.

That first advance nearly killed him. By the end of the day, Woody had more than 83 grenade fragments in his body. He had bleeding wounds in his arms, chest, and thighs. And yet he still wanted to fight. So after a day with the medics, he defied the doctor's orders and returned to the battlefield. And that is where, on October 20th, 1951, Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble made history.

Communist forces still held a crucial hill that was the pearl of their defenses. They had pinned down U.S. forces with a furious assault. One soldier said the enemy lobbed so many grenades on American troops that they looked like a flock of blackbirds in the

* White House correction.

sky. Allied forces had tried heavy artillery to dislodge the enemy, and nothing seemed to be working. The offense was failing, and American boys were dying. But our forces had one advantage. Woody was back, and Woody was some kind of mad.

He grabbed grenades and his weapon and climbed that crucial hill alone. Woody climbed hundreds of yards through dirt and rock, with his wounds aching, bullets flying, and grenades falling all around him. As Woody first started off, someone saw him and remarked, "Either he's the bravest soldier I have ever met, or he's crazy." Soldiers watched in awe as Woody singlehandedly took out one machine gun nest and then another. When Woody was through, all 16 enemy soldiers were dead, the hill was taken, and the Allies had won the day.

Woody Keeble's act of heroism saved many American lives and earned him a permanent place in his fellow soldiers' hearts. Years later, some of those tough soldiers' eyes would fill with tears when they saw Woody again. One said, "He was the most respected person I ever knew in my life." Another said, "I would have followed him anywhere." A third said, "He was awesome." Those brave boys battled tyranny, held the line against a Communist menace, and kept a nation free. And some of them are with us today. We are honored to host you at the White House. We thank you for your courage. We thank you for honoring your comrade in arms. And we thank you for your service to the United States.

As the war ended, Woody went back to North Dakota. In some ways, his return was a sad one. Within a few years, his first wife died. He would suffer from numerous effects of the war. A series of strokes paralyzed his right side and robbed him of his ability to speak. And the wounds he sustained in service to his country would haunt him for the rest of his life.

Yet Woody was not a bitter man. As a member of his family put it: "Woody loved his country, loved his tribe, and loved God." Woody even found love again with a woman named Blossom. Woody may not have been able to speak, but he could still get a message across. He wrote a note asking Blossom to marry him. She told him she needed some

time to think about it. So while she was deliberating, Woody put their engagement announcement in the newspaper. [*Laughter*] This is a man who was relentless in love as well as war. [*Laughter*]

In his community, he was an everyday hero. Even in poor health, he would mow lawns for seniors in the summers and help cars out of the snow banks in the winters. He once picked up a hitchhiker who was down on his luck and looking for work. Woody wasn't a rich man, but he gave the man \$50. Those who knew Woody can tell countless stories like this—one of a great soldier who became a Good Samaritan.

To his last days, he was a devoted veteran. He proudly wore his uniform at local events and parades. Sometimes folks who loved him would see that uniform and ask him about his missing medal. They felt he was cheated, yet Woody never complained. See, he believed America was the greatest nation on Earth, even when it made mistakes. And there was never a single day he wasn't proud to have served our country.

Woody suffered his eighth and final stroke in 1982. His son, Russell, took him to the hospital and prayed it wasn't the end. But Woody knew, and he wasn't afraid. Woodrow Wilson Keeble died in graceful anonymity, unknown except to the fortunate souls who loved him and those who learned from him. Russell puts it this way: "Woody met death with a smile. He taught me how to live, and he taught me how to die."

I am pleased that this good and honorable man is finally getting the recognition he deserves. But on behalf of our grateful Nation, I deeply regret that this tribute comes decades too late. Woody will never hold this medal in his hands or wear it on his uniform. He will never hear a President thank him for his heroism. He will never stand here to see the pride of his friends and loved ones, as I see in their eyes now.

But there are some things we can still do for him. We can tell his story. And we can honor his memory. And we can follow his lead by showing all those who have followed him on the battlefield the same love and generosity of spirit that Woody showed his country every day.

At the request of the Keeble family and in accordance with the Sioux tradition, two empty chairs have been placed on this stage to represent Woody and Blossom and to acknowledge their passing into the spiritual world. The Sioux have a saying: "The life of a man is a circle." Well, today we complete Woody Keeble's circle, from an example to his men to an example for the ages. And if we honor his life and take lessons from his good and noble service, then Master Sergeant Woody Keeble will serve his country once again.

I want to thank you all for coming. May I ask for God's blessings on you and Woody Keeble and the Keeble family. May God continue to bless our country. And now I ask Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Bluedog to join me. Commander Thompson will read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Senator Theodore F. "Ted" Stevens of Alaska; former Gov. William Janklow of South Dakota; Gov. John Hoeven of North Dakota; and Russell Hawkins, stepson, and Kurt Bluedog, grandnephew, of Mr. Keeble. Following the President's remarks, Maj. Mark Thompson, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President, read the citation.

Remarks Following Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan and an Exchange With Reporters

March 4, 2008

President Bush. His Majesty and I will take a couple of questions after opening statements.

Your Majesty, I value your friendship, and I value your leadership. And I appreciate you coming back. America has got no stronger friend in the Middle East than Jordan. And we appreciate the—we appreciate your firmness when it comes to dealing with terror and extremism. We appreciate the heart when it comes to people—your heart when it comes to people who suffer.

We spent a lot of time talking about the Middle Eastern peace process. A couple of points I want to reiterate. One is that the

United States is engaged and will remain engaged in helping convince the Prime Minister of Israel and President Abbas that now is the time to formulate a vision of what a state will look like.

And secondly, I assured His Majesty this is a major focus of my administration and that I would like to see that vision, the process that we have started in Annapolis, finished prior to my departure from the Presidency. In other words, there is a—people say, "Well, you always set—you're hesitant to set timetables." But there happens to be a timetable, as far as I'm concerned, and that is, I'm leaving office. And Secretary Rice is in the region today, and she is making our views known, that we expect these leaders to step up and make hard decisions. And I told His Majesty I'm optimistic—still as optimistic as I was after Annapolis.

And so we welcome you, sir. And thank you for your passion.

King Abdullah. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It is obviously a great honor to be back here and to be with you. We tremendously appreciate the warm relationship and the great friendship between our two countries.

But as His Excellency, the President, just stated, we are very, very pleased with the continued commitment that the President has to solve the longest, most outstanding issue in the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian process. And the words and discussions that we've had this morning will have, I think, a very great response back in our part of the world when I will go back and report to many of my colleagues the President's commitment to bringing a bright future to Israelis and Palestinians and to the whole area.

And we look forward to continuing to work with you, Mr. President, and many of us in the area to finally achieve a peace that will set the Middle East in the right direction.

President Bush. Thank you. A couple of questions apiece.

Ben [Ben Feller, Associated Press].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Ben.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Hold on a second. Ben.

Q. —as you have promised—sorry.

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. Are you—what are your thoughts about the fact that President Abbas has not resumed peace talks? Are you disappointed? And very quickly, sir, you said you're still as optimistic as you were after Annapolis.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. What gives you that optimism?

President Bush. I'm optimistic because I am absolutely convinced that Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas understand that this is now a key moment in achieving peace. Both leaders are committed to a democracy—two democracies living side by side in peace. Both leaders understand that there has to be a vision of what that state will look like. Both leaders fully understand that there has to—you know, have to work out agreements on borders and right of return and other issues. Both leaders understand that a vision that respects people and promotes freedom stands in stark contrast to the extremists who are willing to murder people to stop the advance of democracy and to, you know, dash the ambitions of the Palestinians.

I'm optimistic that they understand that. I understand the difficulties, but I also believe both leaders have—when it—ultimately will have the courage necessary to reach an agreement. And my job as the President and my administration's responsibilities are to help them understand what is possible and to keep them moving on a process. And so I'm optimistic. I am.

Q. Are you disappointed about the lack of resumption in peace talks?

The President. This is a process that, you know, always has two steps forward and one step back. We just got to make sure that it's only one step back. Condi is out there in the region. And sometimes, you know, there's matters going behind the scenes that aren't apparent in the public arena. And so, yes, I'm optimistic. And we'll continue to work hard to help achieve the vision.

Step one is to convince the leaders it's necessary and to help them define a vision so that a state can come into being after conditions are met. But a lot of Palestinians are probably—are saying, "We've heard this kind of rhetoric before. Show us what a state looks like." And I said, a state has got to be contin-

uous—a contiguous territory; it can't look like Swiss cheese. You know, the Palestinians have got to understand that this is an option available for them, and it will stand in stark contrast to the vision of Hamas, which has been nothing more than violence and deprivation.

You want to call on somebody?

Q. Mr. President, as you mentioned—you know, as you approach the end of your term in office, you mentioned that you still feel that establishing the Palestinian state is still achievable.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. What is the exact vision that you have, you know, with this short time left?

The President. Sure, I appreciate it. First of all, 10 months is a long time. May seem short to you, but it's—there's plenty of time to get a deal done.

Secondly, I have visited with the leaders, you know, on a one-on-one basis quite frequently, and I understand that it's—this is a difficult subject. But I also feel very comfortable with the commitment they have made to try to work out subjects that have been difficult for other leaders to work out in the past.

The role of the United States—we can't impose peace. We can help leaders come to agreement and come to the table and make hard decisions. We can help facilitate the bridging of gaps, if there are gaps. And that's exactly what our diplomacy is in the process of doing.

And by the way, there is—and one of the reasons why His Majesty is so important in this process, as are other leaders in the Middle East, including my close friend King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia and President Mubarak of Egypt, is that the—both these leaders are going to need the support of the Arab world in order to make tough decisions. But first, it's up to them. And so I'm optimistic that they can conclude tough negotiations. And we'll try to facilitate that.

Matt [Matt Spetalnick, Reuters].

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)/Oil Prices

Q. Yes, sir. Every indication out of the OPEC meeting of ministers in Vienna is that they will be holding output steady. What is

your reaction to that, sir, in light of your recent visit to the Middle East in which you appealed for an increase in output?

The President. Yes. I think it's a mistake to have your biggest customer's economy slow down—or your biggest customers' economies slowing down as a result of high energy prices. It's not the only result—our economy is slowing down. I mean, obviously, we've got a housing issue and some credit issues. But no question, the high price of gasoline has hurt economic growth here in the United States. And if I were a member of OPEC, I'd be concerned about high energy prices causing people to buy less energy over time.

And the other thing high energy prices of course does—which is stimulate alternative fuels, which we're doing a lot here in America. We're spending a lot of money on biofuels and ethanols and new ways to make ethanol. So my advice to OPEC—of course they haven't listened to it—but my advice to OPEC is to understand the consequences of high energy prices, and—because I do. And I understand that this is affecting our American citizens. It's making it harder for people to be able to drive, and it's making it tough for families to save.

And so not only is it—high energy prices having an effect on—a macroeffect on our economy; it's affecting a lot of our families, which troubles me as well. And by the way, the higher energy prices stay, the more likely it is countries will quickly diversify. And that's part of our strategy.

You want to call on somebody?

King Abdullah. I think one more.

President Bush. One more?

King Abdullah. Yes—[inaudible].

President Bush. Here's a great—ask this lady here; she's good.

Iraqi Refugees/Lebanon/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Apart from the Palestinian issue, did you also discuss Lebanon and Iraq and whether there's a common position between you and Jordan regarding the crisis in Lebanon and the situation in Iraq?

President Bush. Yes, thank you. We did. His Majesty—and he, of course, can answer as well—but His Majesty made it very clear

to me that stability in Iraq is important for Jordan. He also pointed out something which I knew, but I wasn't exactly sure how it was affecting his country, that there are roughly three-quarters of a million Iraqi citizens who have moved to Jordan. And we talked about a common strategy about how to make sure that those citizens ended up, hopefully, going home to Iraq as the security situation improved, but also, while they're in Jordan, not create terrible issues for the Government.

And of course we talked about Lebanon. We strongly—I strongly support Prime Minister Siniora and the March 14th coalition. I strongly condemn a Syrian interference in the Lebanese political process. It is—I am extremely disappointed that the Syrian leader continues to make it hard for the Siniora Government to succeed, and I really don't appreciate the fact that they've made it hard for this Government to elect a President. We had diplomatic success in the past, when the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution seeing to it that Syria left this young democracy to be able to grow on its own. And now here they are once again interfering inside the politics of this country.

And so, yes, we discussed the subject.

King Abdullah. And all I can add to that, on the issue of Lebanon, is how we discussed the role of Arab countries and how we can be effective in supporting the process in Lebanon, so that as quickly as possible a government is formed which will be able them—to take them to the future.

President Bush. Thank you all very much. We've got to go have lunch with our wives.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

Remarks on the Situation in Colombia

March 4, 2008

This morning I spoke to President Uribe of Colombia. He updated me on the situation

in his country, including the continuing assault by narcoterrorists as well as the provocative maneuvers by the regime in Venezuela.

I told the President that America fully supports Colombia's democracy and that we firmly oppose any acts of aggression that could destabilize the region. I told him that America will continue to stand with Colombia as it confronts violence and terror and fights drug traffickers.

President Uribe told me that one of the most important ways America can demonstrate its support for Colombia is by moving forward with a free trade agreement that we negotiated. The free trade agreement will show the Colombian people that democracy and free enterprise lead to a better life. It will help President Uribe counter the radical vision of those who are seeking to undermine democracy and create divisions within our hemisphere.

Our country's message to President Uribe and the people of Colombia is that we stand with our democratic ally. My message to the United States Congress is that this trade agreement is more than a matter of smart economics; it is a matter of national security. If we fail to approve this agreement, we will let down our close ally, we will damage our credibility in the region, and we will embolden the demagogues in our hemisphere.

The President told me that the people across the region are watching to see what the United States will do. So Republicans and Democrats in Congress need to come together and approve this agreement. By acting at this critical moment, we can show the Colombian people and millions across the region that they can count on America to keep its word and that freedom is the surest path to prosperity and peace.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe

March 4, 2008

On March 6, 2003, by Executive Order 13288, I declared a national emergency and blocked the property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706). I took this action to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions. These actions have contributed to the deliberate breakdown in the rule of law in Zimbabwe, politically motivated violence and intimidation, and political and economic instability in the southern African region. On November 22, 2005, I issued Executive Order 13391 to take additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 by ordering the blocking of the property of additional persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe.

Because the actions and policies of these persons continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on March 6, 2003, and the measures adopted on that date and on November 22, 2005, to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond March 6, 2008. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 4, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:38 a.m., March 4, 2008]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on March 5.

**Message to the Congress on
Continuation of the National
Emergency With Respect to
Zimbabwe**

March 4, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2008.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 4, 2008.

**Remarks at the Washington
International Renewable Energy
Conference**

March 5, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. Thanks for coming. It's my honor to be here. I'm proud to address the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference. Thankfully, you only left it for five words. [*Laughter.*] I appreciate your commitment to renewable energy. I probably didn't help today when I rode over in a 20-car motorcade. [*Laughter.*]

I appreciate the fact that—I hope you understand that you're pioneers on the frontiers of change; that I fully suspect that this conference will seem unbelievably outdated within a decade; that people will marvel about how far technology has helped change our habits and change the world. And I hope you take great pride in being a part of this constructive change. And so thanks for coming to America. We welcome you here.

To my fellow citizens, thanks for being entrepreneurs and forward thinkers. To members of my administration, like Sam Bodman, who just introduced me, or Ed Schafer, the head of the Agriculture Department, or Steve Johnson, EPA, thank you all for serving our country. Thanks for your kind words, Sam. I appreciate all the others who are here from my administration.

Mike Eckhart is the president of the American Council on Renewable Energy. He and I went to Harvard together. I don't know if he has had to spend time overcoming that, but I certainly have and—[*laughter*—] particularly in Texas politics. But it's good to be with my friend Mike. I can assure you that when we were at Harvard Business School together, he never envisioned that we would be in our respective positions, like we are today. As a matter of fact, I know in 1975, he never even thought about the word “renewable fuel,” much less “President George W. Bush.”

I welcome the Ambassadors who are here. I welcome—listen, let me start first by telling you that America has got to change its habits. We've got to get off oil. And the reason why is, first, oil is—dependency on oil presents

a real challenge to our economy. As economies grow—and we want all our economies to grow. We want people to be prosperous. We want people who are living in poverty to be able to grow out of poverty. We want there to be general prosperity. But as economies grow, until we change our habits, there is going to be more dependency on oil.

My job, as the President of the country, is to put progrowth policies in place. But we're dependent upon oil, and so as our economy grows, it's going to create more demand for oil—same with China, same with India, same with other growing countries. It should be obvious to you all that the demand is outstripping supply, which causes prices to go up. And it's making it harder here in America for working families to save and for farmers to be prosperous and for small businesses to grow.

The dependency upon oil also puts us at the mercy of terrorists. If there's tight supply and demand, all it requires is one terrorist disruption of oil and that price goes even higher. It's in our interests to end our dependency on oil because it—that dependency presents a challenge to our national security. In 1985, 20 percent of America's oil came from abroad. Today, that number is nearly 60 percent.

Now, all the countries we import from are friendly, stable countries, but some countries we get oil from don't particularly like us. They don't like the form of government that we embrace. They don't believe in the same freedoms we believe in. And that's a problem from a national security perspective for the United States and any other nation that values its economic sovereignty and national sovereignty.

And finally, our dependence on fossil fuels like oil presents a challenge to our environment. When we burn fossil fuels, we release greenhouse gases. The concentration of greenhouse gases has increased substantially.

We recognize all three of these challenges, and we're doing something about it. I've come today to tell you that America is the kind of country that when they see a problem, we address it head-on. I've set a great goal for our country, and that is to reduce our dependence on oil by investing in technologies that will produce abundant supplies

of clean and renewable energy and, at the same time, show the world that we're good stewards of the environment.

Now, look, I understand stereotypes are hard to defeat. People get an image planted in their head, and sometimes it causes them not to listen to the facts. But America is in the lead when it comes to energy independence; we're in the lead when it comes to new technologies; we're in the lead when it comes to global climate change—and we'll stay that way.

Overall, over the past 7 years, or since I've been the President, the Federal Government spent more than \$12 billion to research, develop, and promote alternative energy sources. Our private sector is investing a lot of money, and I fully understand there needs to be consistent policy out of the U.S. Government that has thus far provided incentives to invest. What the Government doesn't need to do is send mixed signals. I understand private capital, understand how it flows. And so when people look at the United States to determine whether we're committed to new technologies that will change how we live, they not only need to look at the Federal investment, but they've got to understand, there's a lot of smart money heading into the private sector to help develop these new technologies.

Our strategy is twofold: One, we're going to change the way we drive our cars; and two, we'll change the way we power our businesses and homes. In other words, the two most vulnerable areas to economic disruption happens to be automobile use and electric power. The two biggest opportunities to help change the environment is through how we drive our cars and how we power our country. So first, let me talk about automobiles.

I laid out a goal for the United States to reduce gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years; that's called 20-10. Now, by the way, that's in the face of a growing economy, to reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years.

And we'll work with Congress. For those of you who watch the American legislative process, you think it's probably impossible for the American President to work with Congress these days. Well, it's not true. I was able to sign a good piece of legislation called

the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. This legislation specifies a national mandatory fuel economy standard of 35 miles per gallon by 2020, which will save billions of gallons of gasoline.

Secondly, the legislation requires fuel producers to supply at least 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel in the year 2022. In other words, these just aren't goals; these are mandatory requirements. I'm confident the United States can meet those goals, and I know we must for the sake of economic security, national security, and for the sake of being good stewards of the environment.

Biodiesel is the most promising of these fuels. Biodiesel refineries can produce fuel from soybeans and vegetable oils and recycled cooking grease, from waste materials. All you out there with waste, you may be in business before you know it as this new technology kicks in. Most Americans—or more Americans are beginning to realize the benefits of biodiesel every year.

Last year, we produced 450 million gallons of biodiesel. That's up 80 percent from 2006. Today, there are more than 650 biodiesel fueling stations in America. There are hundreds of fleet operators that use biodiesel to fuel their trucks, and that's just the beginning of what is going to be a substantial change in our driving habits.

And then there's ethanol. In the 2000 campaign, I strongly supported ethanol. In 2008, it's amazing to think about how far our country has come since the year 2000. Ethanol production has quadrupled from 1.6 billion gallons in 2000 to a little over 6.4 billion gallons in 2007.

And the vast majority of that ethanol is coming from corn, and that's good. That's good if you're a corn grower. And it's good if you're worried about national security. I'd rather have our corn farmers growing energy than relying upon some nation overseas that may not like us. That's how I view it.

In 2005, the United States became the world's leading ethanol producer. Last year, we accounted for nearly half of the worldwide ethanol production. I don't know if our fellow citizens understand that, but there is a substantial change taking place, primarily in the Midwest of our country.

Corn ethanol holds a lot of promise, but there's a lot of challenges. If you're a hog raiser in the United States, you're beginning to worry about the cost of corn to feed your animals. I'm beginning to hear complaints from our cattlemen about the high price of corn. The high price of corn is beginning to affect the price of food.

And so we got to do something about it. And the best thing to do is not to retreat from our commitment to alternative fuels but to spend research and development money on alternatives to ethanol made from other materials. For example, cellulosic ethanol holds a lot of promise. I'm sure there are people in the industry here that will tell you how far the industry has come in a very quick period of time.

I look forward to the day when Texas ranchers can grow switchgrass on their country and then have that switchgrass be converted to fuel. I look forward to the day when people in the parts of our country that have got a lot of forests are able to convert wood chips into fuel. And those days are coming.

The Department of Energy had dedicated nearly \$1 billion to develop technologies that can make cellulosic ethanol cost competitive. And the interesting thing that's happened in a relatively quick period of time is that the projected cost of cellulosic ethanol has dropped by more than 60 percent. In other words, new technologies are coming. The job of the Federal Government is to expedite their arrival.

Expanding the use in ethanol and biodiesel requires getting more cars on the road that use these alternative fuels. Now, we expect the private sector to respond. Our consumers are going to demand flex-fuel vehicles when they find out that these new technologies are available. As a matter of fact, there's 5 million flex-fuel vehicles on our roads now. I just saw some new ones here. Amazing joint venture with Mack and Volvo on these giant trucks that are using biodiesel to power them. I said, can you make it more than a couple of miles? The man said, "Not only we can make it more than a couple of miles; we can accelerate out of danger if we need to."

Technology is changing. Five years ago, those trucks would not have been available

for people at this exhibit to look at. Today, they're on the road. As a matter of fact, the United States Air Force is using these kinds of trucks. Things are changing.

Another way to reduce our dependence on oil is promote hybrid vehicles. We're providing tax incentives to people to buy these fuel-efficient vehicles. In other words, the Government is saying, if you buy one, we'll give you a little incentive to do so. I've supported those policies. I think it makes sense to create a consumerism for these kinds of vehicles.

When I was first elected, there were virtually no hybrids on the roads. Today, there is nearly a million. We're also investing in plug-in hybrids. We want our city people driving not on gasoline but on electricity. And the goal, the short-term goal is to have vehicles that are capable of driving the first 40 miles on electricity—vehicles that don't look like a golf cart, by the way, vehicles that meet consumer demand. And that day is coming. The battery technologies are amazing, and the United States is investing millions of dollars to hasten the day. The battery technology is more efficient and competitive.

This administration is a strong supporter of hydrogen. We spent about \$1.2 billion in research and development to bring vehicles running on hydrogen to the market. A lot of people don't even know what I'm talking about when I'm talking about hydrogen. But the waste product of a hydrogen-powered vehicle is pure and clean water.

This is an amazing opportunity for us. Now, this will be a long-term opportunity compared to ethanol and biodiesel and plug-in hybrids. But it makes sense to invest now and work on the technology so that when it comes—becomes cost-competitive, it's available. We're also working for the day when, you know, these new fuels power not only automobiles and trucks but airplanes.

In December, the United States Air Force flew a C-17—that's a huge airplane—from Washington State to New Jersey. For those of you who don't live in America, that is a long way. And they did so on a blend of regular and synthetic fuels. I was interested to see that Virgin Atlantic flew a 747 from London's Heathrow Airport to Amsterdam fueled partly by coconuts and Brazilian ba-

basu nuts. I've never seen a babassu nut, but it's amazing that it helped power an airplane the size of a 747. [Laughter]

What I've just described to you is the beginning of a new era. And—oh, it's probably hard to equate it to the Model T, but maybe we're not that far off. And the United States believes it's in our interests to promote this new era.

Secondly, we've got to reduce our dependence on oil and fossil fuels and replace them with alternative energy sources to power our homes and our workplaces. Look, you can't have a vibrant economy unless you've got reliable electricity. For those of you in the developing world, you know what I'm talking about. As a matter of fact, the issue is not reliable electricity; the issue is getting electricity to people in the first place. Well, here in the United States, we've overcome those issues. And now we've got to make sure that we have enough of it that enables us to continue to grow. And the truth of the matter is, you've got to be—have a growing economy to be able to afford these technologies in the first place. So here are some ways that we're dealing with the issue of electricity.

One, I strongly believe the United States must promote nuclear power here in the United States. Nuclear power—[applause]—if you're interested in economic growth and environmental stewardship, there's no better way to achieve both of them than through the promotion of nuclear power. Nuclear power is limitless. It's one existing source that generates a massive amount of electricity without causing any air pollution or any greenhouse gases.

And yet the United States—we haven't built any nuclear powerplants in a long time. What a promising technology available, and yet we're stuck—until recently. All of our citizens probably don't understand, but France, our ally and friend, gets nearly 80 percent of its power from nuclear power. Isn't that an amazing statistic? It's time for America to change.

My administration is working to eliminate the barriers to development of nuclear powerplants. Last year, we invested more than \$300 million in nuclear energy technologies. We want our people to understand that this generation of nuclear powerplants is safe. We

want people to feel comfortable about the expansion of nuclear power.

There's regulatory uncertainty when it comes to permitting plants in the United States. You can't expect somebody to invest a lot of money and have the regulatory process at the very end stop that capital from being deployed. It makes no sense. Just like tax policy has to be certain, so does regulatory policy have to create a sense of certainty in order to get people to invest.

So in the energy bill I signed in 2005, we began to address that uncertainty with Federal risk insurance for those who build nuclear powerplants. This insurance protects the builders of the first six new plants against lawsuits—we got a lot of them in America, by the way, too many lawsuits, in my judgment—against bureaucratic obstacles and against delays beyond the—that would cause people to hesitate to participate in this program.

We've also launched a program called Nuclear Power 2010. Sam Bodman is in charge of all these. It's a partnership between our industry and the U.S. Government. Since we've started these programs, we've received six applications to build and operate new nuclear powerplants in the United States. The paradigm is beginning to shift. And we anticipate that another 13 applications will be submitted this year.

Many of the construction projects will be supported by \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees provided by the Government. By the way, that's part of a loan-guarantee product—projects that we got out of Congress—18 billion for the nukes, 10 billion for renewable energy expansions in the United States. This will enable our plant owners, guys that are applying for loans—*[laughter]*—the whole purpose is, is we want to expand our nuclear power industry. And we're taking specific actions to do it.

You know, there's a lot of politicians who just talk. I hope when history is written of this administration, we not only talked; we actually did positive things and constructive things.

We're also working with our friends overseas for the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. I believe developing nations ought to be encouraged to use nuclear power. I be-

lieve it's in our interests. I believe it will help take pressure off the price of oil. And I know it's going to help protect the environment. And so we're working with other nations, like Japan and France and Great Britain and Russia and China, to form this energy partnership, the purpose of which is to help developing nations secure cost-effective and proliferation-resistant nuclear power and, at the same time, to conduct joint research on how to deal with the nuclear waste issue through positive, productive reprocessing.

And so the United States of America has got a strategy to help change our electricity mix here at home. And part of that strategy is on nuclear power. Another part of that strategy is based upon wind power. Now, since 2001, America has increased wind energy production by more than 300 percent. This is a new industry for us, and it's beginning to grow. More than 20 percent of new electrical generating capacity added in America came from wind last year. I met some of the wind boys. They're excited about the opportunities in the U.S. market, and they should be because this new technology is taking hold. Last year, America installed more wind power capacity than any other country in the world.

I don't know if you know this or not: When I was the Governor of Texas, I signed a electric deregulation bill that encouraged and mandated the use of renewable energy. Today, Texas is—produces more wind energy than any other State in the Union. If an oil State can produce wind energy, other States in America can produce wind energy. I remember when I signed the bill, I said, there's a new day coming for wind. And they said, "Well, you're leaving the State, and a lot of hot air is going with it." *[Laughter]*

In addition to wind power, we have spent, since I've been the President, \$1 billion on harnessing the power of the Sun. The solar technology folks who are here will tell you there's some amazing changes have taken place in a quick period of time. I mean, I really see a day in which each house can be a little electric generator of their own and feeding back excess power into the grid through the use of solar power.

I told you that we're—and by the way, last year, U.S. solar installations grew by more

than 32 percent in the U.S. In other words—I hope you’re excited by these statistics. I certainly am. But these are just the beginning. Before I came over here, I really did sit around the Oval Office trying to figure out what a President will be saying 10 years from now. If you really think about what would have been said in 2000 compared to today, imagine what’s going to be said 10 years from now compared to today.

I will repeat something I’ve been saying a lot here in America. The United States is serious about confronting climate change. And the strategies I just laid out for you are an integral part of dealing with climate change. Should there be an international agreement? Yes, there should be, and we support it. But I would remind you, an agreement will be effective—and that’s what we want; we want an effective agreement. I think we ought to be results-oriented people, not process people. It’s one thing to have a nice conference, but out of those conferences, we should expect results. We want a strategy that works, not sounds good.

And so in order for there to be effective international agreements, it must include—these agreements must include commitments, solid commitments, by every major economy, and no country should get a free ride.

And meeting this goal is going to take some tough choices. I’ve got a good man named Dan Price on my staff who is leading the U.S. efforts on the major economies conferences that we’re hosting. That’s, by the way, running parallel to the U.N. process. This is not in lieu of the U.N. process; it is to enable the U.N. process to become effective.

The first step is to get the major economies to agree to a goal. If you want commitment, if you want all folks at the table, the first step has got to be to say, we’ve got a problem, and here’s a goal. I believe in setting clear goals, goals that are easy to understand.

And then it’s up to us, each nation, to develop a strategy to help meet those goals. We’ve got different economies. We’ve got different electricity mixes. What I’ve just described to you is a strategy to deal with energy dependence as well as climate change. It’ll be different from country to country.

We’ve got a different energy mix than a lot of nations do.

And we expect countries that sign up to that goal to develop a strategy to meet that goal. And the United States will do the same thing, see. We’re not going to say, okay, you set the goal, and you meet it, but we’re not going to join. Once we join, we join. And so you’re watching a process unfold to make sure that we have an effective international agreement.

And I fully understand—and by the way, I want to repeat what I said before: An effective agreement is one that recognizes that economies got to grow in order to be able to afford investment in the first place, that you must have economic wealth in order to be able to afford the research and development.

This is an issue that requires substantial commitments of money, and it’s hard to commit money if you don’t have any, and it’s hard to commit money if your economies are hurting. So we ought to make sure we grow our economies and, at the same time, have the money necessary to invest. And I fully understand some nations are incapable of affording these new technologies.

And here’s what we intend to do about it. There ought to be an international fund, a clean technology fund from the wealthy nations to help poorer nations clean up their environments. I call on our Congress to commit \$2 billion to the fund. And in my travels here in my last year of the Presidency, I’m going to call on other wealthy nations to contribute to this fund.

I want any agreement to be effective. I don’t want us just to feel good. I want to be able to say, when it’s all said and done, we’ve done something that’s actually going to solve the problem. And if people are truly interested in solving the problem, if you’re interested in expanding alternative energy, then we need to come together to eliminate tariffs and other trade barriers to enable clean technologies to move duty free around the world.

There’s too many impediments. There’s too much protectionism. I mean, if you’re truly interested in solving global climate change, then you should insist to your leaders to join the United States and other countries

to make it easier to move these products, to eliminate all barriers to trade and technologies that will enable us to be better stewards of the environment.

So here's the strategy to deal with climate change and energy dependence. The United States not only is pursuing this strategy on an international basis; we're also have got bilateral partnerships. With Brazil, for example, we signed a biofuels compact. We signed agreements with China to expand cooperation on biomass and to improve energy efficiencies for vehicles and industrial production. We're working with Sweden—the Deputy Prime Minister is here, and I'm honored you are here—on a very constructive relationship. There's a U.S. company working with United Kingdom's Wave Hub to harness the power of the seas.

This is an ambitious vision I've just described to you. And obviously you support something ambitious being done, otherwise you wouldn't be here at this conference. I hope you're excited when you see the exhibits. Just keep in mind how far we have come in a short period of time, and be hopeful about how far we will go in a short period of time.

There was an article in the New York Sun not long after Alexander Bell's famous phone call, his first phone call to a fellow named Thomas Watson. I would like to read to you from that article: "It is to be doubted if the telephone will be used otherwise than locally. It's too sensitive for circuits exceeding a few miles in length." Imagine if that author of that article were alive today. I suspect he would have been sorry he used the words "it should be doubted." After all, he'd see a world where crystal-clear telephone calls are placed over circuits that stretch not miles but across the globe. He would see a wireless infrastructure developing around the world.

Same thing is going to happen when it comes to energy. Oh, I know there's doubters, but I'm confident that when we look back at this period of time, they will say, how could you have doubted the capacity of mankind to develop the technologies necessary to deal with the real problems of the 21st century?

Leave with one thing in mind: The United States is committed, and we're firm in our

commitments to deal with energy problems and to deal with global climate change. And it's been my honor to be with you today.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Prime Minister Maud Olofsson of Sweden. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Lunch With Senator John McCain of Arizona and an Exchange With Reporters

March 5, 2008

The President. It's been my honor to welcome my friend John McCain as the nominee of the Republican Party. A while back, I don't think many people would have thought that John McCain would be here as the nominee of the Republican Party, except he knew he would be here, and so did his wife, Cindy.

John showed incredible courage and strength of character and perseverance in order to get to this moment. And that's exactly what we need in a President, somebody that can handle the tough decisions, somebody who won't flinch in the face of danger.

We also need somebody with a big heart. I have got to know John well in the last 8 years. I've campaigned against him, and I've campaigned with him. Laura and I have spent time in their house. This is a man who deeply loves his family. It's a man who cares a lot about the less fortunate among us. He's a president, and he's going to be the President who will bring determination to defeat an enemy and a heart big enough to love those who hurt.

And so I welcome you here. I wish you all the best, and I'm proud to be your friend.

Senator McCain. Thank you, sir. Well, I'm very honored and humbled to have the opportunity to receive the endorsement of the President of the United States, a man who I have great admiration, respect, and affection. We—he and I, as is well known, had a very good competition in the year 2000, and I was privileged and proud to have the opportunity to campaign for his election and

reelection to the Presidency of the United States.

I appreciate his endorsement. I appreciate his service to our country. I intend to have as much possible campaigning events together, as it is in keeping with the President's heavy schedule. And I look forward to that opportunity. I look forward to the chance to bring our message to America.

Last night, as you know, both Senator Obama and Senator Clinton called to congratulate me. I pledged at that time and I pledge again a respectful campaign—a respectful campaign based on the issues and based on the stark differences in vision that we have for the future of America.

I hope that the President will find time from his busy schedule to be out on the campaign trail with me. And I will be very privileged to have the opportunity of being again on the campaign trail with him—only slightly different roles this time. [Laughter]

I thank you, Mr. President, and it's a pleasure to be here.

The President. Yes, we'll answer a couple of questions.

Abramowitz [Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post]. Sorry you got such a lousy seat back there. [Laughter]

2008 Presidential Election

Q. I wanted to ask about—[inaudible]. The voters, according to a lot of the exit polls, seem to be searching for change this year. And I'd like to ask both of you—excuse me—I'd like to ask both of you how the Republican Party, which has been here for 8 years, is going to make the case that you're going to provide the change that the voters seem to want, both on Iraq and on the economy?

The President. Let me start off by saying that in 2000, I said, vote for me; I'm an agent of change. In 2004, I said, I'm not interested in change; I want to continue as President. Every candidate has got to say "change." That's what the American people expect.

And the good news about our candidate is, there will be a new President, a man of character and courage, but he's not going to change when it comes to taking on the enemy. He understands this is a dangerous world, and I understand we better have steadfast leadership who has got the courage

and determination to pursue this enemy so as to protect America.

John McCain will find out, when he takes the oath of office, his most important responsibility is to protect the American people from harm. And there's still an enemy that lurks, an enemy that wants to strike us. And this country better have somebody in that Oval Office who understands the stakes, and John McCain understands those stakes.

Senator McCain. Thank you, sir. I don't have anything to add. [Laughter]

Q. Can I follow up, sir? How would you—

The President. No, you can't follow up. Thank you. [Laughter]

Q. Yes, on—

The President. No, no, not you. Going to call Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News]? Kelly.

President's Endorsement/2008 Presidential Election

Q. Senator McCain, given President Bush's low approval ratings, will this be a negative or a positive for you? And how much do you hope he'll campaign for you on the trail?

Senator McCain. I hope that he will campaign for me as much as is keeping with his busy schedule. I'll be pleased to have him with me, both from raising money and the much needed finances for the campaign and addressing the challenging issues that face this country. I'm pleased to have him as is—as it fits into his busy schedule.

Kelly.

Vice Presidential Candidates/2008 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, Senator McCain—sir, how would you counsel Senator McCain to choose a runningmate, how quickly? And given the fact that Democrats will field a nominee who will make some kind of history—a woman, an African American—should Republicans consider that in selecting a Vice Presidential nominee?

The President. I'd tell him to be careful about who he names to be the head of the selection committee. [Laughter] Look, he's got plenty of experience. He knows what he needs to do, which is to have a process that

vets candidates, and the person—it's got to be somebody he's going to be comfortable with and somebody whose advice he relies upon. And he can answer his own question on that, but—

Senator McCain. Could I just say, Kelly, I didn't think it was appropriate to contemplate this process, as I've discussed before, until after we had secured the nomination of the party. Now we'll begin that process.

Q. Should history make a difference with a woman or an African American on the Democratic side?

The President. People don't vote for Vice Presidents, as much as I hate to say that for those who have been candidates for Vice President. They're going to vote for who gets to sit inside that Oval Office and make decisions on how to protect the country and keep taxes low and how to have a culture that respects the dignity of every human being. And that's what the race is all about. I know there's going to be a lot of speculation on who the Vice President, this and that, but the speculation is over about who our party is going to nominate.

Senator McCain. Liz [Liz Sidoti, Associated Press].

President's Endorsement/2008 Presidential Campaigning

Q. Mr. President, do you—how much do you intend to do for Senator McCain? And do you think, in some cases, that your help could actually hurt him more than help him?

The President. Look, if it—if my showing up and endorsing him helps him, or if I'm against him and it helps him, either way, I want him to win. [Laughter] You know, look, this is an age-old question that you—every President has had to answer, and there's an appropriate amount of campaigning for me to do.

But they're not going to be voting for me. I've had my time in the Oval Office. It's been a fabulous experience, by the way. And they're going to be voting for the next person to come in here and make the tough decisions about America—America's security, America's prosperity, and, you know, America's hopefulness. That's what this race is

about, and it's not about me. You know, I've done my bit.

And, by the way, I'm not through, and I'm going to do a lot. And John is right; I do have a day job to keep, and I plan on keeping it. I've told the people that follow me in this press corps that I'm going to sprint to the finish, and I mean what I say. I've got a lot to do. But I'm going to find ample time to help, and I can help raising money, and if he wants my pretty face standing by his side at one of these rallies, I'll be glad to show up.

But they're going to be looking at him, you know. I'm going to be in Crawford—[laughter]—with my feet up. He's going to be sitting in there behind that desk making the decisions on war and peace, and I'm thankful our party has nominated somebody plenty capable of making those decisions. And when the American people take a hard look, they're going to feel comfortable, like I feel comfortable, in recommending him to take my place.

Listen, we thank you.

Wolf [Richard Wolf, USA Today], where's Wolf? No, I'm not calling you. Wolf. No, not you either. Where's Wolf?

Q. Right here.

The President. Well, ask something, will you? [Laughter]

Q. Where do you think you can be most helpful campaigning for him around the country?

The President. You know, look—I mean, if—

Q. And Senator McCain, where would you like the President to campaign with you?

The President. As I told you, you know, if he wants me to show up, I will. If he wants me to say, "You know, I'm not for him," I will. Whatever he wants me to do, I want him to win. And, you know, Wolf, I don't know where. I mean, look—

Senator McCain. Could I start out with—

The President. I'm focusing on, you know, protecting America and succeeding in Iraq and dealing with the North Korean and dealing with the Iranian and dealing with the issues around the world where we're making a difference in terms of keeping peace. I want to get this in as good as a position as

possible so that when John McCain is the President—and he will be—he can deal with these issues in a way that yields peace.

Senator McCain. Wolf, could I say, I—one State springs to mind, Texas. [Laughter]

The President. He's not going to need me in Texas. He's going to be a landslide in Texas.

Senator McCain. Could I just say that I do intend to campaign all across the country. I think that literally every section in this country is at play—in play. And I will be glad to have the President with me, in keeping with his schedule, in any part of America. And we're going to go everywhere in America with this campaign.

The President. Listen, thank you all very much for coming.

Q. Did you talk names for Vice President? [Laughter]

Q. One press conference every week if you're elected, Senator?

The President. Thank you all very much. It's been a pleasure to see you. Obviously we've invited some unruly members of the fourth estate here. I'm disappointed in the conduct of some of the people that have come. I told John it would be a nice and polite crowd. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Frank W. Buckles

March 6, 2008

Sitting next to me is Mr. Frank Buckles, 107 years young, and he is the last living doughboy from World War I. And it has been my high honor to welcome Mr. Buckles and his daughter, Susannah, here to the Oval Office.

Mr. Buckles's mind is sharp; his memory is crisp; and he's been sharing with me some interesting anecdotes. I asked him where he lived, and he said, "That reminds me of what General Pershing asked me." And he told the general that he was raised on a farm in Missouri. And the general said, "Well, you know,

as the crow flies, it's 40 miles from where I was raised." So Mr. Buckles has a vivid recollection of historic times.

And one way for me to honor the service of those who wear the uniform in the past and those who wear it today is to herald you, sir, and to thank you very much for your patriotism and your love for America.

So we're glad you're here. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:49 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on the Fifth Anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security

March 6, 2008

Thank you very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your kind introduction, and I appreciate your outstanding leadership for this Department. I'm really pleased to join you on the fifth anniversary of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. Man, does time fly. [Laughter]

When this Department was established following the September the 11th terrorist attacks, it was hard to imagine that we would reach this milestone without another attack on our homeland. For those of you who were here 5 years ago, if you think back to that time, I don't think we would have predicted that 5 years later there had not been another attack on us. Yet we've been—[applause]—and it's your vigilance and your hard work that have helped keep this country safe. And so I want to thank you. I hope you take enormous pride in the accomplishments of this Department, and I hope you know the American people are grateful for your service, and so am I.

On this anniversary, we must also remember that the danger to our country has not passed. Since the attacks of 9/11, the terrorists have tried to strike our homeland again and again. We've disrupted numerous planned attacks, including a plot to fly an airplane into the tallest building on the west coast and another to blow up passenger jets headed for America across the Atlantic Ocean. The lesson of this experience is clear.

It's clear to me, and I know it is clear to you. The enemy remains active, deadly in its intent, and in the face of this danger, the United States must never let down its guard.

I thank Tom Ridge for being the first Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security; it's good to see him again. I appreciate—[*applause*—I want to welcome the members of my Cabinet who've joined us, the leadership team at the Department. I appreciate the fact that a fine United States Senator and a great patriot has joined us today, Senator Joe Lieberman.

I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps who've joined us. I appreciate the former DHS employees who are here; I appreciate all the current DHS employees for serving our country. And I want you to thank your families for the sacrifices you're making. I want to thank—[*applause*—and I appreciate the Homeland Security partners from across the country who've joined us for this fifth anniversary.

The events of September the 11th, 2001, demonstrated the threats of a new era. I say new because we found that oceans which separate us from separate—different continents no longer separate us from danger. We saw the cruelty of the terrorists and extremists, and we glimpsed the future they intend for us. In other words, there's some serious lessons on September the 11th that it's important for all Americans to remember. Two years ago, Usama bin Laden warned the American people, quote, "Operations are under preparation, and you will see them on your own ground once they are finished." All of us, particularly those charged with protecting the American people, need to take the words of this enemy very seriously. And I know you do.

At this moment, somewhere in the world, a terrorist is planning an attack on us. I know that's inconvenient thought for some, but it is the truth. And the people in this hall understand that truth. We have no greater responsibility, no greater charge than to stop our enemies and to protect our fellow citizens.

To protect the American people, we are on the offense against the terrorists around the world. It is better to defeat them over there than to face them here in the United

States. Since the enemy attacked us, since they declared war, since we've responded, we've captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida leaders and operatives in more than two dozen countries. With our allies, we removed dangerous regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan that had harbored terrorists and had threatened our people.

Our men and women in uniform, those in the United States military are helping people of those countries fight the terrorists and build free societies and secure the peace for their children and ours. We owe our military a debt of gratitude, and we owe them something more. We owe them all the tools necessary to do the jobs we expect of them.

This war against these extremists and radicals who would do us harm is the great ideological struggle of our time. We're in a battle with evil men. I call them evil because if you murder the innocent to achieve a political objective, you're evil. These folks have beliefs. They despise freedom. They despise the right for people to worship an Almighty the way he or she sees fit. They desire to subject millions to their brutal rule. Our enemies oppose every principle of humanity and decency that we hold dear. They kill innocent men and women all the time. The only way these terrorists can recruit operatives, the only way they can convince somebody that their dim vision of the world is worth following is to feed on hopelessness and despair.

And so our policy is to oppose this hateful ideology by offering an alternative vision, one based upon freedom and liberty. Across the world, America feeds the hungry; we fight disease; we fight tyranny. We promote the blessings of a free society, not only because it's in our national interest—national security interests, but because it's in our moral interests. You see, by bringing the hope of freedom to these societies, we'll help peaceful people marginalize the extremists and eliminate the conditions that feed radicalism. And so for the sake of our security, for the sake of the peace of our children, the United States of America will stay on the forefront of spreading freedom and liberty around the world.

As we wage this struggle abroad, we're also building the institutions we need here at

home to keep our country safe. The second part of the strategy is to protect the homeland. The first part is to stay on the offense, bring people to justice where we find them, and spread liberty as the great alternative to their hateful ideology. The second part of the strategy, of which you're intricately involved, is to protect America. And that's why I'm here to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security, because you're on the frontlines of doing what the American people expect us to do, and that's to protect them.

Before 9/11, there was no single Department of Government charged with protecting the homeland. So we undertook the most sweeping reorganization of the Federal Government since the start of the cold war. We merged 22 different Government organizations into a single Department with a clear mission: Secure America, and protect the American people from future attacks.

The past 5 years, the men and women of this Department have carried out that mission with skill and determination. In ways seen and unseen, you work each day to protect our people from dangerous and determined enemies. I know how hard you work; a lot of Americans don't. And perhaps on this fifth anniversary, the message will get through that there's a lot of dedicated, decent, honorable folks working their hearts out to protect the country.

The Department of Homeland Security is working to stop terrorists from infiltrating our country. On 9/11, America was attacked from within by 19 men who entered our country, hid among us, and then killed thousands. To stop this from happening again, we've taken important steps to prevent dangerous people from entering America. We made our borders more secure. We've deployed new technologies for screening people entering America.

We're on track to double the number of Border Patrol agents who serve our country. For those of you who—that wear the uniform of the Border Patrol, thanks for what you're doing. We've unified our terrorism databases into one central database. We are enhancing it with biometric capabilities. We've improved the way we evaluate visa applicants. We made it harder to counterfeit travel docu-

ments. We want to know who's coming to our country and who's leaving our country, and we take significant steps to be able to tell the American people the answer to those questions.

Secondly, the Department of Homeland Security is working to stop terrorists from smuggling biological and chemical and nuclear weapons into our cities. The Department has deployed a layered system of protections against these dangerous materials that starts overseas, continues along our borders, and extends throughout our country. We've launched innovative programs to protect major metropolitan areas by providing early detection of biological or nuclear or radiological attacks. We are determined to stop the world's most dangerous men from striking America with the world's most dangerous weapons.

The Department of Homeland Security is working to protect our transportation systems and other critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks. Our enemies have declared—they have made it abundantly clear that if they can strike economic targets here in America, they can terrorize our people and do great harm to our economy. So in the face of this threat, the Department of Homeland Security has taken decisive action. Since 9/11, we've worked with the private sector to develop comprehensive security plans for 17 of the Nation's critical sectors, including our food and water supplies, chemical and nuclear facilities, power grids and telecommunications networks.

Under Operation Neptune Shield, the men and women of the Coast Guard are protecting more than 360 ports and more than 95,000 miles of coast guard. We've taken action to protect our transportation systems, including a massive overhaul of security at our airports and new steps to protect our railways and mass transit systems.

The message should be clear to the American people. We will protect our country; we will protect our economy from those who seek to do us harm.

The Department of Homeland Security is working to strengthen our defenses against cyber attacks. Our enemies understand that America's economy relies on uninterrupted use of the Internet and that a devastating

attack in cyberspace would be a massive blow to our economy and way of life. And so we've taken steps to enhance our cyber security, created a new National Cyber Security Division in this Department charged with protecting against virtual terrorism. We've established a Computer Emergency Readiness Team to provide 24-hour watch, so we can stop cyber attacks before they spread and cripple our economy. The United States Secret Service has established 24 Electronic Crimes Task Forces with a mission to prevent, detect, and investigate cyber attacks on our country.

As we protect our cyber networks, we're also working to deny our enemies the use of the Internet to recruit and train operatives and plan attacks on America. Our strategy is to deny the terrorists safe haven anywhere in the world, and that includes a virtual safe haven on the Internet.

The Department of Homeland Security is working to strengthen cooperation with State and local governments, so we can prevent terrorist attacks and respond effectively if we have to. Before 9/11, the Federal Government sent threat information to authorities—local authorities by fax machine. Today, we've established 21st century lines of communication that allow us to share classified threat information rapidly and securely. We've helped State and local officials establish intelligence fusion centers in 46 States. These centers allow Federal officials to provide intelligence to our State and local partners and allow locally generated information to get to officials here in Washington who need it.

Even all these steps—with even all these steps, we know that a free society—there's no such thing as perfect security. That's the challenge. To attack us, the terrorists only have to be right once; to stop them, we need to be right 100 percent of the time. And so we're working to ensure that if attack does occur, this country is ready. We'll do everything we can to stop attacks, and we are. I can confidently tell the American people, a lot of folks are working hard to protect them with a good, comprehensive strategy.

But if the enemy is able to make it here and attack us, we want to be able to respond. And so since September of 2001, we've pro-

vided more than \$23 billion of equipment and training and other critical needs for America's State and local first-responders. We want people at the local level prepared.

We've worked with officials in 75 major metropolitan areas to improve the ability of first-responders to communicate clearly in an emergency. We've helped establish mutual aid agreements with States and strengthened the Emergency Management Assistant Compact among States, so that when communities need help from their neighbors, the right assistance will get to the right people at the right time.

We've greatly expanded the Nation's stockpile of drugs and vaccines that would be needed in the event of a bioterrorist attack or a mass casualty incident. We now have enough smallpox vaccine for every American in case of an emergency. We've increased our investments in biodefense medical research and development at the National Institutes of Health by more than 3,000 percent since 2001. We launched Project BioShield, an effort to speed the development of new vaccines and treatments against biological agents that could be used in a terrorist attack.

We've learned from our mistakes to improve our response when disaster strikes. When Hurricane Katrina hit our Nation's gulf coast, it exposed weaknesses in America's emergency response capabilities, so we retooled and restructured FEMA. Since Hurricane Katrina, we've improved FEMA's logistics management, strengthened its operations planning, augmented disaster assistance programs, and provided the Agency with additional personnel and resources.

And we have seen outstanding results as a result of these efforts. FEMA's response to the California wildfires, to the Minneapolis bridge collapse, and the tornadoes that struck the Mississippi Valley last month were exemplary. Despite these efforts, today, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security—because of these efforts, FEMA and Homeland Security are better prepared. There's still work to do, but we're doing it. We're never satisfied here in the Department of Homeland Security. We're constantly assessing weaknesses and needs and constantly adjusting, because there's no greater calling than to protect our country.

The Department of Homeland Security is vital to our safety, and it's just one of the institutions that have been built or transformed to keep our Nation safe. We created the new Office of Director of National Intelligence, which led a broad restructuring of our Nation's intelligence agencies for the threats of the 21st century. We transformed the FBI into an Agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorism and reorganized the Department of Justice to help combat the threat.

We created the National Counterterrorism Center, where members of this Department, as well as the FBI and the CIA and other Departments and Agencies, work side by side to track terrorist threats and prevent new attacks.

At the Department of Defense, we created a new Northern Command responsible for homeland defense and enhanced Strategic Command that is responsible for defending America against long-range attacks.

We created the Proliferation Security Initiative, a coalition of more than 85 nations that are working together to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related materials.

And to find out what the terrorists know about planned attacks, we established a program run by the CIA to detain and question key terrorists and operatives.

My administration is determined to ensure those in our Government charged with defending America have the tools they need to fight the terrorists. One of the most important tools is the ability to monitor terrorist communications. To stop new attacks on America, we need to know who the terrorists are talking to, what they're saying, and what they're planning.

We cannot get this vital information without the cooperation of private companies. Unfortunately, some private companies have been sued for billions of dollars because they are believed to have helped defend America after the attacks of September the 11th. Allowing these lawsuits to proceed is—would be unfair because if any of these companies helped us, they did so after being told by the Government that their assistance was legal and their assistance was necessary to defend the homeland.

Allowing these lawsuits to proceed would be unwise because litigation could lead to the disclosure of information about how we conduct surveillance and give Al Qaida and others a roadmap as to how to avoid the surveillance. Allowing these lawsuits to proceed would be dangerous because private companies besieged and fearful of lawsuits would be less willing to help us quickly get the information we need.

The United States Senate passed a good bill that will protect companies from these lawsuits and ensure our intelligence professionals have the tools they need to keep us safe. This bill passed by a strong bipartisan majority of 68 to 29, and a bipartisan majority of the House stands ready to pass the Senate bill if a vote were held. Unfortunately, House leaders blocked a vote on the Senate bill about 3 weeks ago. At the time, House leaders declared they needed 21 more days to work out their differences and get a bill to my desk. The deadline arrives on Saturday. If House leaders are serious about security, they will need to meet the deadline they set for themselves, and pass the bipartisan Senate bill, and get it to my desk this Saturday.

The men and women of the Department of Homeland Security can be proud of all that you have accomplished in 5 years. I've just laid out some of that which you've accomplished, and it took me about 30 minutes. You have built a vital and effective Department that is helping to prevent dangerous enemies from striking our people. Your efforts and all the institutions we have built since 9/11 are a lasting legacy that will give future generations and future Presidents the instruments they need to keep our country safe.

The most important legacy we can leave behind is a commitment to remain vigilant. With the passage of time, the memories of September the 11th have grown more distant. For some, there is temptation to think that the threats to our country have grown distant as well. They haven't. And our job is to never forget the threat and to implement strategies that will protect the homeland from those who seek us harm.

Under the superb leadership of Secretary Chertoff, that is what the men and women of this Department do each day. And so on

behalf of the people, thanks for stepping forward; thanks for shouldering this awesome responsibility. You're working with vital partners in State and local and tribal governments, in the private and nonprofit sectors, and the international community to meet the threats of our time. Many of you serve in dangerous circumstances, and on this anniversary, we remember all those who have given their lives to keep our people safe.

I appreciate every member of the Department of Homeland Security for your dedication and your courage and your resolve. You're helping to ensure that as we wage the war on terror across the world, we never forget where it began: in our homeland.

May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. at DAR Constitution Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem

March 6, 2008

I condemn in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack in Jerusalem that targeted innocent students at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva. This barbaric and vicious attack on innocent civilians deserves the condemnation of every nation.

I have just spoken with Prime Minister Olmert to extend my deepest condolences to the victims, their families, and to the people of Israel. I told him the United States stands firmly with Israel in the face of this terrible attack.

Remarks on the Situation in Cuba

March 7, 2008

Sientese. Gracias. Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here; Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished officials, honored guests.

We gather today to remember a tragic moment in the history of Cuba. Five years ago this month, Cuban authorities rounded up

scores of citizens and charged them with offenses against the regime. Those arrested included teachers and librarians and journalists. They committed no crimes. They simply held views their Government did not like, and they refused to be silent. In all, 75 people were given long prison terms. In the world of Cuban dissidents, that crackdown 5 years ago is remembered as the Black Spring.

A few moments ago, I met with one of the men arrested in that crackdown, Miguel Sigler Amaya, *y su esposa*, Josefa. Miguel was arrested in this crackdown because he and his brothers had long opposed the Castro regime. Over many years, they had been harassed and they had been beaten by Cuban authorities. Miguel once had his ribs cracked by one of the regime's mobs. One of the brothers survived an assassination attempt, and the entire family had received death threats. Now during the Black Spring, Miguel was charged with disobedience. He was sentenced to 26 months in prison. His brothers, Ariel *y* Guido, each received sentences of 20 years.

When Miguel went to prison, his wife, Josefa, found common cause with the wives of other political prisoners. They formed a group and chose as their symbol the color white, the color of peace. Every Sunday, these Ladies in White—*las Damas de Blanco*—attend Catholic mass, and then together they walk in silence through the streets. In Cuba, even that simple act is considered dangerous defiance. The women have been subjected to harassment and beatings. Josefa herself was stopped by an assailant who told her that he was sending her a message, and then he clubbed her with a blunt object on the back of her head.

Josefa was ordered to leave Cuba with Miguel once he was released from prison in 2006. In Cuba, they are considered outlaws. In America, they are heralds of freedom, and I'm proud to stand with them in the White House.

Miguel and Josefa tell a compelling story about brutal repression right off the shores of the United States. And I want to thank you for letting us share your stories, and I thank you for your courage.

I've asked Josefa to please tell the Ladies in White—*las Damas de Blanco*—that as

they pray for a free Cuba, the American people—many American people will pray for them. And we can be confident that a loving God will listen.

For Miguel and Josefa, the horrors of life in Cuba are behind them, but millions of others are still trapped in the tropical gulag. Miguel's brothers still suffer under inhumane conditions in Cuban jails. The Ladies in White still bravely march for freedom. And most of the Cubans imprisoned during the Black Spring are still in jail, subjected to beatings, inadequate medical care, and long separations from their family.

These prisoners of conscience live in daily torment, and so do hundreds of others. Yet most of the world says nothing. This is a sad and curious pattern.

Last fall, dozens of young Cubans who wore bracelets imprinted with one word, *cambio*, or change, were arrested by Cuban police because of their political beliefs. Yet in the face of this assault on the freedom of expression, much of the world was silent.

Last December, Cuban authorities stormed into a Catholic church, teargassed parishioners, and dragged 18 worshipers out. A Catholic official called the episode, quote, "the worst attack against a church in 45 years." And yet in the face of this assault on religious freedom, much of the world was silent.

And last weekend, Cubans were pushed and shoved and beaten as they distributed copies of the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights. That same week, Cuba signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The international community applauded Cuba for signing a piece of paper, but on the abuses that same week, much of the world was silent.

In the face of these abuses, the United States has not been silent, nor will we be silent. We have been consistently joined in condemning the Cuban regime's brutal outrages by a small band of brave nations. Countries such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia have placed themselves at the forefront for the fight for human freedom in Cuba. They recently lived through Communist tyranny. They remember what life is like under the boot of the oppressor. They

know the daily hardships that ordinary citizens have to endure just to survive. And they refuse to look away.

Unfortunately, the list of countries supporting the Cuban people is far too short, and the democracies absent from that list are far too notable. When a new day finally dawns for Cubans, they will remember the few brave nations that stood with them and the many that did not.

A few weeks ago, reports of the supposed retirement of Cuba's dictator initially led many to believe that the time had finally come for the United States to change our policy on Cuba and improve our relations with the regime. That sentiment is exactly backward. To improve relations, what needs to change is not the United States; what needs to change is Cuba. Cuba's Government must begin a process as peaceful democratic change. They must release all political prisoners. They must have respect for human rights in word and deed and pave the way for free and fair elections.

So far, all Cuba has done is replace one dictator with another. And its former ruler is still influencing events from behind the scenes. This is the same system, the same faces, and the same policies that led Cuba to its miseries in the first place. The United States is isolating the Cuban regime, and we're reaching out to the Cuban people. We've granted asylum to hundreds of thousands who have fled the regime. We've encouraged private citizens and charities to deliver food and medicine and other assistance directly to the people of Cuba. As a result, the American people are the largest providers of humanitarian aid to the Cuban people in the entire world.

This assistance is easing burdens for many Cuban families. But the sad fact is that life will not improve for the Cuban people until their system of government changes. It will not improve by exchanging one dictator for another. It will not improve if we prop up the same tyranny for the false promise of so-called stability.

As I told the Cuban people last October, a new day for Cuba will come. And we will know when it's here. We will know it's here when jailers go to the cells where Cuban prisoners of conscience are held and set them

free. We will know it is here when Miguel Sigler Amaya is reunited with his brothers, and they can say what they think and can come and go as they please. And we will know it is here when the Ladies in White no longer make their silent vigils or live in constant fear of assault or arrest.

Until that day comes, the United States will continue to shine a bright and revealing light on Cuba's abuses. We will continue to tell the stories of Cuba's people, even when a lot of the world doesn't want to hear them. And we will carry this refrain in our hearts: *Viva Cuba Libre*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Raul Castro Ruz and former President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the National Economy

March 7, 2008

Earlier today I spoke with members of my economic team. They updated me on the state of our economy. This morning we learned that our economy lost 63,000 payroll jobs in February, although the unemployment rate improved to 4.8 percent.

Losing a job is painful, and I know Americans are concerned about our economy. So am I. It's clear our economy has slowed. But the good news is, we anticipated this and took decisive action to bolster the economy by passing a growth package that will put money into the hands of American workers and businesses.

I signed this growth package into law just 3 weeks ago, and its provisions are just starting to kick in. First, a growth package includes incentives for businesses to make investments in new equipment this year. These incentives are now in place, and they are starting to have an impact. My advisers tell me that investment in new equipment remains solid thus far in the first quarter.

And as more businesses take advantage of these new incentives as well as lower interest rates, we expect investment will continue to grow and that businesses will begin creating new jobs in the months ahead.

Secondly, the growth package will provide tax rebates to more than 130 million American households. Now, these rebates will begin reaching American families in May. And when the money reaches the American people, we expect they will use it to boost consumer spending, and that will spur job creation as well.

We believe that the steps we've taken, together with the actions taken by the Federal Reserve, will have a positive effect on our economy. So my message to the American people is this: I know this is a difficult time for our economy, but we recognized the problem early and provided the economy with a booster shot. We will begin to see the impact over the coming months. And in the long run, we can have confidence that so long as we pursue progrowth, low-tax policies that put faith in the American people, our economy will prosper.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. on the Colonnade at the White House.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 1

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

March 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, on the North Portico, the President participated in a photo opportunity with the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Voice of Democracy Award recipients.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace: Kerry Kennedy; Ikram U. Khan; Stephen D. Krasner; J. Robinson West; and Nancy M. Zirkin.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy Davenport as a member of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Frances Fragos Townsend as a member of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to designate Jeffrey F. Kupfer as Acting Deputy Secretary of Energy.

March 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in an Oval Office ceremony, he received the annual report of the Boy Scouts of America.

In the afternoon, in the second floor Family Dining Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a social lunch for King Abdullah II and Queen Rania of Jordan. Later, at DAR Constitution Hall, he made remarks to political appointees and Federal Government employees.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia to the White House on March 28.

March 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had separate telephone conversations with former Republican Presidential candidates Michael D. Huckabee, W. Mitt Romney, Fred D. Thompson, Rudolph W. Giuliani, and Duncan L. Hunter to thank them for their campaigns. Later, at the Washington Convention Center, he toured the tradeshow floor of the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference.

In the afternoon, on the North Portico, the President participated in the arrival of Senator John McCain of Arizona and his wife,

Cindy Hensley McCain. Later, in the Private Dining Room, he had lunch with Senator McCain. He then met with Republican congressional leaders.

The President announced that he has nominated James B. Cunningham to be Ambassador to Israel.

The President announced that he has nominated Neil Suryakant Patel to be Assistant Secretary for Communications Information at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced that he has nominated Alexander Passantino to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor.

The President announced that he has nominated Donald G. Teitelbaum to be Ambassador to Ghana.

The President announced that he has nominated Frank Urbancic, Jr., to be Ambassador to Cyprus.

March 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Shi'a councilmen from Sadr City, Iraq, and Sunni city councilmen from Adhamiyah, Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Yellow Oval Room of the Residence, the President met with the Washington Post Editorial Board.

The President announced that he has named Tobi Merritt Edwards as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Felipe Eduardo Sixto as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Nancy Theis as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Correspondence.

March 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with Major League Baseball Productions.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Miguel Sigler Amaya and Josefa Lopez Pena, brother and sister-in-law of Cuban political prisoners Ariel and Guido Sigler Amaya. Later, he traveled to Arlington, VA, where, at the Pentagon, he participated

in Defense Department briefings. He then returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Illinois and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on January 7 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 5

James B. Cunningham,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Israel.

Kerry Kennedy,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011, vice Laurie Susan Fulton, term expired.

Ikram U. Khan,
of Nevada, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Holly J. Burkhalter, term expired.

Stephen D. Krasner,
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011, vice Charles Edward Horner, term expired.

Alexander Passantino,
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Paul DeCamp.

Neil Suryakant Patel,
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, vice John M.R. Kneuer.

Donald Gene Teitelbaum,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ghana.

Frank Charles Urbancic, Jr.,
of Indiana, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cyprus.

J. Robinson West,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011 (reappointment).

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 1

Transcript of a conference call press briefing by Office of National Drug Control Policy Director John P. Walters on the 2008 National Drug Control Strategy

Fact sheet: 2008 National Drug Control Strategy

Released March 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Released March 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia

Released March 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: Increasing Our Energy Security and Confronting Climate Change Through Investment in Renewable Technologies

Released March 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 2571

Released March 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino, Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Edward P. Lazear, and

National Economic Council Director Keith Hennessey

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Illinois

Fact sheet: Taking Responsible Action To Keep Our Economy Growing

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved March 6

S. 2571 / Public Law 110–193
To make technical corrections to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act